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# 1 **Angling selects against active and stress-resilient** 2 **phenotypes in rainbow trout**

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## Abstract

Selection induced by human harvest can lead to different patterns of phenotypic change than natural predation and could be a major driving force of evolution of wild populations. The vulnerability of individuals to angling depends on the individual decision to ingest the bait, possibly mediated by their neuroendocrine response towards the associated stimulus. To investigate the mechanisms behind individual vulnerability to angling, we conducted angling experiments in replicated ponds and quantified individual behavioral traits and neuroendocrine stress responsiveness in two salmonid species, rainbow trout and brown trout. We discovered a phenotypic syndrome in rainbow trout, but not in brown trout, where lower serotonergic and dopaminergic brain activity and cortisol levels (i.e., lower stress responsiveness) in response to a standardized experimental stressor were associated with higher activity, forming a proactive phenotype that showed increased vulnerability to angling. Our results show that angling targets the most stress-resilient and active phenotypes of rainbow trout, supporting the suggestion that fishing-induced phenotypic selection may lead to an increased representation of stress-responsive and low-activity phenotypes in harvested populations.

**Keywords:** coping styles, fishing selection, hook avoidance, pace-of-life syndrome, phenotypic integration

## 41 Introduction

42 Natural and human predation often select for different traits, which can lead to divergent  
43 or even opposing selection patterns (Carlson et al. 2007). For example, while natural  
44 predators are usually gape-limited (Godin 1997), fisheries tend to focus on the harvest of the  
45 largest individuals of the population because of their value and physical gear constraints, and  
46 facilitated by harvest regulations (Jørgensen and Holt 2013; Allendorf and Hard 2009). A  
47 large body of literature has revealed that intense and size-selective harvesting favors  
48 evolution of fast life-history (e.g., Jørgensen et al. 2009; Heino et al. 2015; Uusi-Heikkilä et  
49 al. 2015). The pace-of-life syndrome (POLS) hypothesis predicts that individual life-history,  
50 behavioral and physiological traits are correlated along a gradient of slow to fast life-history  
51 strategies (Réale et al. 2010). Accordingly, individuals with for example a fast pace-of-life  
52 are predicted to be bold and active, and to have a low hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA)  
53 axis reactivity, i.e. low stress responsiveness, traits associated with rapid growth (Koolhaas et  
54 al. 1999; Coppens et al. 2010). Following the POLS, fishing selection might in turn also lead  
55 to corresponding changes in the behavior and stress responsiveness of surviving phenotypes  
56 (Biro and Post 2008; Uusi-Heikkilä et al. 2008). Evidence for fisheries-induced evolution of  
57 behavior and physiology is however scarce (Heino et al. 2015; Arlinghaus et al. 2017; Díaz  
58 Pauli and Sih 2017; Hollins et al. 2018).

59 Furthermore, with passive fishing gear, the harvest-induced selection depends on the  
60 ultimate decision of an individual fish to ingest a bait, attack a lure or approach a trap or  
61 gillnet, based on the perception and processing of different sensory cues (Andersen et al.  
62 2016; Arlinghaus et al. 2017; Hollins et al. 2018). A number of studies have shown that  
63 vulnerability to harvest by passive fishing gear, such as angling, is positively related to  
64 behavioral traits such as boldness, aggression, exploration or activity (Klefoth et al. 2012;

65 Sutter et al. 2012; Härkönen et al. 2015; Wilson et al. 2015; Alós et al. 2016; Klefoth et al.  
 66 2017; Monk and Arlinghaus 2017a). However, the evidence is far from conclusive as several  
 67 empirical studies report no or limited correlations between angling vulnerability and certain  
 68 behavioral traits (Kekäläinen et al. 2014; Vainikka et al. 2016; Monk and Arlinghaus 2017b).

69 The pathways to a decision (i.e. to a behavioural response) varies between individuals  
 70 based on their global bodily state, defined by a combination of sensory information,  
 71 physiological and developmental state, and motivations (e.g., hunger or threat levels; LeDoux  
 72 2012). The behavioral response can therefore differ between individuals, mediated by  
 73 underlying differences in the activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-interrenal axis (HPI  
 74 axis) that controls the release of corticosteroids to the blood circulation (e.g., cortisol), and  
 75 brain neurochemistry (e.g., serotonin and dopamine monoamine neurotransmitters and  
 76 noradrenalin; Andersen et al. 2016; Coppens et al. 2010; Wendelaar Bonga 1997). While  
 77 evidence has been provided revealing a link between stress responsiveness (i.e. activation of  
 78 the HPI-axis) and cognitive appraisal of aversive stimuli (Moltesen et al. 2016), this link has  
 79 rarely been investigated in the context of vulnerability to fishing (Louison et al. 2017) and  
 80 remains not well understood (Hollins et al. 2018).

81 The divergent results found in studies investigating the behavioral drivers for  
 82 vulnerability to fishing might arise from gear and species-specific differences and be affected  
 83 by the context of studies. For instance, compared to studies in controlled laboratory  
 84 environments, in natural systems the spatial component might be a more important driver for  
 85 the encounter between gear and fish overriding the individual variability in the decision  
 86 pathways to attack a lure or ingest a bait (Monk and Arlinghaus 2017a,b). To improve our  
 87 understanding of the mechanisms that drive the capture process and identify which traits  
 88 might be under selection, studies on populations with a known phenotypic distribution

89 conducted at relevant spatio-temporal scales that allow fish to express their natural response  
90 to fishing gear (Klefoth et al. 2012; Härkönen et al. 2014) are required. Such studies can then  
91 be scaled to population-level processes through whole system studies or modelling (Andersen  
92 et al. 2018).

93 In the present study, we investigated, using a replicated pond system, the selection  
94 mechanisms of angling by looking at the behavioral and neurobiological basis of the  
95 variability in vulnerability to angling in two salmonid species with different domestication  
96 histories, rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss* (Walbaum, 1792)) and brown trout (*Salmo*  
97 *trutta*, L.). Specifically, we addressed the following questions: (i) Do capture patterns differ  
98 between rainbow trout and brown trout? (ii) Are behavioural type and stress responsiveness  
99 correlated phenotypic traits? (iii) Is vulnerability to angling linked to individual phenotype of  
100 fish?

## 101 Material and Methods

### 102 Experimental setup and activity monitoring

103 To answer our questions, we used four semi-controlled mesocosm ponds to carry out two  
104 replicated angling experiments on stocked fish of known size distribution and for which we  
105 recorded capture rates, order of capture, individual activity and stress responsiveness. Each  
106 mesocosm pond (area = 720 m<sup>2</sup>, depth = 2 m), belonging to the Swedish Anglers'  
107 Association (*Sportfiskarna*) in Gothenburg, Sweden (57.693°N, 12.037°E; Appendix A1),  
108 was stocked with size-matched rainbow (298 ± 19 mm) and brown trout (281 ± 15 mm) in  
109 equal densities (25 individuals per species and pond). Both trout species originated from the  
110 same hatchery and were reared under comparable conditions (*Källefalls Fiskodling*). The  
111 brown trout were F1 offspring from wild parents captured in the near-by *Lake Vättern*. The

rainbow trout were of a domesticated strain, bred since 1997 within the hatchery and used exclusively for stocking in Swedish waters.

Prior to release, the fish were anesthetized (10 % benzocaine at 0.3 ml L<sup>-1</sup>), measured for body wet mass and length, and a passive integrated transponder (PIT-tag; HDX ISO 11784/11785, 23 mm, 0.6 g in air, Texas Instruments Inc.) was inserted into the coelomic cavity for individual identification and activity monitoring in the ponds (thereafter, referred to as pond activity). A custom-made radio frequency identification detection (RFID) system was deployed in each pond to monitor pond activity of tagged fish, which was recorded over 35 days, covering a period before, during and after the angling experiments (between October 2<sup>nd</sup> and November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014). Each RFID system consisted of a set of four detection antennas (2.2 × 2.3 m) deployed vertically and connected to a RFID half-duplex reader (Oregon RFID), which recorded time and date, antenna ID, and the PIT tag code for each detected fish. Detection range of antennas covered the entire antenna surface within a distance of 50 cm around the antenna frame. Raw detection data from the RFID antenna monitoring system was filtered based on fish ID, detection interval and antenna, in order to account for the bias induced by repeated detections of a single fish when remaining in the vicinity of the detection array of an antenna. The filtered number of detections per individual was highly correlated to the number of relocations between two antennas (*i.e.* number of times a fish moves between two antenna frames at distinct positions; Spearman rank correlation:  $r = 0.88$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicated that the filtered number of detections of our RFID system can be used as a reliable proxy for individual activity, telling apart inactive fish from moving fish, and is not inflated by the detections of stationary fish nearby an antenna.

### Angling treatments

135 Two common types of angling techniques were used; natural shrimp baits on a single hook  
136 and spinners as example of an artificial lure. Natural bait-angling was carried out using the  
137 shrimp on a barbless hook attached beneath a float. Anglers were fishing passively with the  
138 shrimp bait by casting it and retrieving it slowly, while lure angling was fished actively using  
139 a spinner (Myran WIPP Yellow/White, 10 g), which was cast and retrieved at a faster speed.  
140 With the exception of these two types of terminal tackles, identical angling equipment was  
141 used for the experiments (Appendix A2). Angling was carried out by instructed and  
142 experienced volunteer anglers. Hooked fish were landed with a knotless net, unhooked and  
143 kept in a holding tank until returned to their pond at the end of the fishing event (i.e., day). A  
144 fish could thus be captured only once per fishing event (i.e., day), but recaptured at each new  
145 event in following days.

146 ***Experiment 1.*** After 26 days of acclimation in the experimental ponds, including 10 days of  
147 pre-angling activity monitoring, the first fishing experiment was conducted. Fishing  
148 experiments were designed to ensure a certain level of fish captures despite the small-scale  
149 study system and limited experimental period. It consisted of a total of 10 days of angling,  
150 with five days (i.e. events) of natural bait angling followed by five days of lure angling, with  
151 two angling-free days in between. Each angling day, one angling event of one hour of  
152 effective angling time took place at dawn, during which three anglers were rotating every  
153 tenth minute within or between ponds according to a randomization schedule to control for  
154 bias in fishing skills of anglers and site preference (Appendix A2). Overall, each pond  
155 received a total angling effort of 30 h (3 anglers x 1 hour x 5 days x 2 weeks) or 42 angler  
156 hours per hectare. In experiment 1, angling was practiced in only two of the four  
157 experimental ponds (pond 1 and 3; Fig. A1) and was designed to identify (i) the individual  
158 vulnerability to angling over time and its phenotypic correlates in rainbow trout and in brown  
159 trout, and (ii) the species-specific selectivity of angling technique.



160 **Experiment 2.** The second angling experiment consisted of three angling events with  
 161 simultaneous bait and lure angling and a total angling effort of 6 hours per pond (2 anglers ×  
 162 1 hour × 3 days; 8.5 angler hours per hectare) or following the same procedure as in  
 163 experiment 1 (see also Appendix A2). Angling was this time performed in all four ponds (see  
 164 Fig. A1), to compare hook avoidance response in fish that have either been previously  
 165 exposed or that were naïve to angling. Both angling techniques were used simultaneously to  
 166 verify the results from the species-specific selectivity of angling technique from experiment  
 167 1, while excluding the temporal effect of a successive use of angling technique.

#### 168 **Stress responsiveness to a standard stressor**

169 After the angling experiments, we measured individual stress-responsiveness of fish by  
 170 quantifying the products of the two main hormonal systems involved in stress response in fish  
 171 (i.e. corticosteroids, catecholamines and their monoamine precursors; Schreck and Tort 2016)  
 172 in response to a standardized exposure to an experimental stressor (i.e. transfer to holding  
 173 tanks for a minimum of 12h + 30 min open-field test). To do so, we drained the ponds and  
 174 transferred fish to flow-through holding tanks where we kept them for minimum 12 h before  
 175 exposing them to a 30 min open-field test (see Appendix A3 for detailed protocol of the  
 176 open-field test). Following the behavioral scoring, we anaesthetized fish (10 % benzocaine at  
 177 0.5 ml L<sup>-1</sup>) and measured their body mass and length (SL) to get a measure of growth, before  
 178 we assessed their individual physiological stress responsiveness by measuring circulating  
 179 plasma cortisol, brain neurotransmitter activity (serotonin and dopamine system,  
 180 noradrenaline).

181 Blood samples were taken from the caudal vein into a 1-ml heparinized syringe and kept  
 182 on ice until sampling of a group of four fish was completed. Blood was then centrifuged for 7  
 183 min, plasma obtained, frozen on dry ice and stored at -80 °C until analysis. Plasma cortisol

184 levels were measured by radioimmunoassay (Young 1986; Sundh et al. 2011). Anaesthetized  
185 fish were then euthanized by cutting the spinal cord. Brains were dissected out and  
186 separated into hindbrain (optic tectum, cerebellum and brain stem) and forebrain  
187 (telencephalon and diencephalon), frozen in tinfoil on dry ice and stored at -80 °C until  
188 analysis. Monoamine neurotransmitters and metabolites were extracted from the hindbrain  
189 and measured using HPLC-ED (high performance liquid chromatography with  
190 electrochemical detection). Levels of noradrenaline (NA), serotonin (5-hydroxytryptamine, 5-  
191 HT), dopamine (DA), and DA and 5-HT major metabolites (5-hydroxyindoleacetic acid (5-  
192 HIAA) and 3,4-dihydroxyphenylacetic acid (DOPAC) were measured after being normalized  
193 for wet mass of brain tissue and expressed in ng by g of brain. The ratios between metabolite  
194 and monoamine, 5-HIAA/5-HT and DOPAC/DA, were used as indicators for serotonergic  
195 and dopaminergic activity, respectively.

## 196 **Data analysis**

197 ***Overall and species-specific catchability.*** We modeled the effects of species, angling gear  
198 and previous exposure to angling on number of captures collected from the two angling  
199 experiments using generalized linear models (GLM; using a Poisson distribution with log  
200 link-function). Using angling experiment 1, we compared the number of captures using bait  
201 angling between species (i.e. rainbow trout, brown trout) and the number of captures using  
202 artificial lure between species. In order to get an idea of general hook avoidance, we used the  
203 capture data from experiment 2 to compare the number of captures based on previous  
204 exposure to angling, i.e. from ponds 2 and 4, where fish were naïve to angling with those  
205 from ponds 1 and 3, where fish had already been exposed to angling. We then used the data  
206 from only ponds 2 and 4, with fish that were naïve to angling, to compare the number of  
207 captures by species and fishing gear (i.e. natural bait, artificial lure). No significant pond, or  
208 size effect were found and were thus removed from the final models.

209 ***Association between phenotypic traits.*** Correlations between activity measured in the ponds,  
 210 and the physiological variables involved in a stress response were tested using Pearson's  
 211 correlation test, estimating Pearson's  $r$  and its 95% Confidence Intervals (CI). Adjusted  $p$ -  
 212 values were computed using the false discovery rate method to account for multiple  
 213 comparisons (Benjamini and Hochberg 1995). Data analysis was done separately for rainbow  
 214 and brown trout. A further distinction was made for fish from ponds 1 and 3 and fish from  
 215 ponds 2 and 4 as they were exposed to different total angling efforts, which may have  
 216 influenced physiological stress response of fish measured after the experimental angling.  
 217 Pond 1 and 3 are thereafter referred to as high angling intensity treatment (36 hours of  
 218 angling effort or 42 angler hours per hectare), and pond 2 and 4 as low angling intensity  
 219 treatment (6 hours of angling effort or 8.5 angler hours per hectare). Angling intensities from  
 220 both treatments can be compared to angling efforts from small lakes or put-and-take ponds  
 221 over the course of a few days to a couple of weeks. Correlation analysis showed that pond  
 222 activity and physiological measurements were not related to body size nor to specific growth  
 223 rate (SGR). In general, fish presented a slight loss in wet body mass between the beginning  
 224 and end of the experiment, and a low variability of SGR between individual fish (mean  $\pm$  SD  
 225 rainbow trout:  $\text{SGR} = -0.18 \pm 0.07$ , brown trout:  $\text{SGR} = -0.16 \pm 0.06$ ). Accounting for individual  
 226 fish size or growth was therefore deemed unnecessary for subsequent analysis.

227 ***Vulnerability of fish to angling and phenotypic correlates.*** The vulnerability of individual  
 228 fish to capture by angling was modeled using semi-parametric Cox proportional hazard  
 229 regressions, with the probability until first capture as response variable. Comparisons were  
 230 first made between species, and then for each species a separate model was constructed to  
 231 investigate the relationship with individual plasma cortisol levels (in response to a standard  
 232 experimental stressor), activity monitored in the ponds and activity monitored in laboratory  
 233 conditions. Activity recorded in laboratory open-field test was however unrelated to

234 vulnerability to angling in both species and could thus be removed from the survival models.  
235 Such survival analysis enables to incorporate the information of captured and uncaptured  
236 individuals (i.e. right censored data), as well as of the time to event (e.g. the capture order of  
237 individual fish). For the single species model, the used hazard function is of the form:

$$h(t|z) = h_0(t) \exp(\beta z)$$

238 where  $h_0$  is the baseline hazard,  $z$  is a time independent predictor (i.e. activity in the ponds or  
239 in laboratory conditions or plasma cortisol) and  $\beta$  is the hazard coefficient, estimated using a  
240 partial likelihood function.

241 At the end of the experimental period, some brown trout males were maturing and were  
242 excluded from data analysis to avoid any confounding effects related to maturation. This  
243 explains the slightly lower sample sizes for the analyses of brown trout compared to rainbow  
244 trout data (see results section for details). Data handling and analysis was computed using the  
245 packages *car* and *survival* for the *R* statistical environment.

## 246 Results

### 247 Technique- and species-specific vulnerability to angling

248 In experiment 1, 72 out of 100 fish (72 %) were captured at least once. Overall, more rainbow  
249 trout were captured (45 out of 50 fish, i.e. 90 %), than brown trout (27 out of 50 fish, i.e. 54  
250 %; Fig. 1). The time to capture and the probability of remaining uncaptured was significantly  
251 lower in rainbow trout than in brown trout (see results from the survival analysis Table 1;  
252 Fig. 2), indicating a lower intrinsic vulnerability to angling and/or stronger hook avoidance in  
253 brown trout. More recaptured individuals and higher individual recapture rates were observed  
254 in rainbow trout (25 fish recaptured, up to 3 times and one fish up to 4 times over the two  
255 experiments) compared to brown trout (9 fish recaptured only once). Additionally, in

experiment 2, the number of fish captured in ponds previously exposed to angling was significantly lower than in ponds with fish naïve to angling (effect of angling treatment:  $F_{1,25} = 5.12$ ,  $p = 0.032$ ; Fig. 3), indicating an avoidance response in both fish species when previously exposed to angling.

During the first week of experiment 1 using natural bait, significantly more rainbow trout than brown trout were captured ( $F_{1,16} = 11.08$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ; Fig. 1), whereas no significant differences were observed between rainbow trout and brown trout captured during the second week with spinner lures ( $F_{1,16} = 1.61$ ,  $p = 0.223$ ; Fig. 1). This result was confirmed in experiment 2, with simultaneous bait and lure angling (interaction of species and angling technique effect:  $F_{1,22} = 5.71$ ,  $p = 0.026$ ): more rainbow trout were captured than brown trout with natural bait (Tukey post-hoc test,  $Z = -2.75$ ,  $p = 0.020$ ; Fig. 3), but there was no species difference in relation to captures with lures (Tukey post-hoc test,  $Z = 0.27$ ,  $p = 0.989$ ; Fig. 3).

### **Context-dependency of phenotypic associations between behaviour and neuroendocrine stress response.**

For rainbow trout from the high intensity angling treatment ( $n = 45$ ; Fig. A2; Fig. 4), cortisol levels, 5-HIAA, and DA turnover (DOPAC/DA) were all positively correlated to each other and negatively correlated with pond activity. Additionally, cortisol, 5-HIAA and 5-HT were positively correlated with DOPAC. For brown trout from the high intensity angling treatment ( $n = 35$ ), 5-HIAA and 5-HT were positively correlated with DOPAC and DA turnover (Fig. A4), and pond activity was correlated to 5-HIAA, 5-HT and 5-HT turnover. Associations between levels of monoamine neurotransmitters in rainbow trout and in brown trout, in response to a standard experimental stressor, indicated the presence of inter-individual differences in the general activation of the HPI-axis in both species. Our results further

279 indicate an association between swimming activity in the ponds and activation of the HPI-  
280 axis in both species.

281 For rainbow trout from the low intensity angling treatment (n = 43) however, no  
282 correlations between cortisol, monoaminergic activity nor pond activity were visible (Fig.  
283 A3). For brown trout from the low intensity angling treatment (n = 35), 5-HT was positively  
284 correlated with DA and activity (Fig. A5). Overall, the results showed that phenotypic  
285 associations were mainly revealed under a context of high and repeated angling intensity and  
286 were less evident for fish from the low intensity angling treatment.

### 287 *Vulnerability of fish to angling and phenotypic correlates*

288 Results from angling experiment 1 (pond 1 and 3) showed that rainbow trout that were caught  
289 first and less likely to remain uncaptured over the course of the experiment had a higher pond  
290 activity and a weaker cortisol response (Table 2, Fig. 5a), indicating that the most active and  
291 stress responsive rainbow trout were relatively more vulnerable to angling. In brown trout,  
292 for which catch rates were much lower than for rainbow trout, no such relationship was found  
293 (Table 3, Fig. 5b).

## 294 Discussion

### 295 **Species selection: conditioned hook avoidance and potential effect of domestication**

296 At a species level, our study confirmed that rainbow trout are more vulnerable to angling than  
 297 brown trout. This finding is consistent with previous angling experiments conducted in both  
 298 rivers and ponds (Anderson and Nehring 1984; Pawson 1991; Mezzera and Largiadèr 2001)  
 299 and thus seems to be a general among-species pattern. But we also found that the relative  
 300 vulnerability to angling between both species was technique-specific: whereas rainbow trout  
 301 was more vulnerable to natural bait angling than brown trout, both species were equally  
 302 vulnerable to lure angling. Studies on a range of predatory species suggest that catchability is  
 303 often higher for natural bait compared to artificial lures (Beukema 1970; Härkönen et al.  
 304 2015; Moraga et al. 2015), indicating that when associated with a reward (i.e. natural bait) the  
 305 conditioned avoidance in response to the aversive stimulus related to angling is reduced.  
 306 These findings were mirrored in our work, where catch rates were overall and specifically for  
 307 rainbow trout higher for natural bait than for artificial lures. Hook avoidance of artificial lures  
 308 was generally extremely rapid within just one or two fishing days, similar to findings in other  
 309 studies (e.g., Askey et al. 2006). These species-specific findings indicate that both species  
 310 respond differently to the cues associated to the passively fished natural bait, shaping the  
 311 relative vulnerability of both species. It is likely that the mechanisms underlying the effects  
 312 relate to interspecific behavioral and physiological differences, and may additionally be  
 313 shaped by domestication effects.

314 Numerous studies have highlighted behavioral and physiological intraspecific differences  
 315 between wild and domesticated strains, the later ones being recognized to be bolder and more  
 316 risk-prone (Johnsson et al. 2001; Sundström et al. 2004; Huntingford and Adams 2005), and  
 317 presenting weaker neuroendocrine stress responsiveness than wild genotypes (i.e. lower  
 318 dopaminergic turnover DOPAC/DA and serotonergic turnover 5-HIAA/5-HT, due to lower

319 levels of serotonin 5-HT and dopamine DA; Lepage et al. 2000). Both species used in this  
 320 experiment were hatchery-reared, but rainbow trout came from a strongly domesticated strain  
 321 shaped by decades of selective breeding whereas the brown trout stemmed from wild parents.  
 322 Although in our experiment, species and degree of domestication is confounded, it is possible  
 323 that the long domestication history rainbow trout were exposed to contributed to their higher  
 324 intrinsic vulnerability, as shown before for carp (*Cyprinus carpio* L.) genotypes differing by  
 325 degree of domestication (Klefoth et al. 2012). Whereas brown trout and rainbow trout differ  
 326 in terms of stress physiology (e.g. rainbow trout has a faster recovery in terms of primary and  
 327 secondary stress response compared to brown trout; Ruane et al. 1999) and behavior (e.g  
 328 foraging and habitat use; Blanchet et al. 2007), the observed increased angling vulnerability  
 329 of rainbow trout relative to brown trout can thus also be partly attributed to effects of  
 330 domestication. Existing studies show indeed that wild strains of rainbow trout have higher  
 331 survival rates and are less likely to be harvested by angling than domesticated strains (Brauhn  
 332 and Kincaid 1982; Dwyer and Piper 1984).

### 333 **Activity and stress responsiveness explain variability in vulnerability to angling in** 334 **rainbow trout**

335 As shown in previous studies, the capture data from our angling experiments has highlighted  
 336 the presence of individual differences in vulnerability of fish to angling shaping overall  
 337 population-level catchability (e.g., Beukema 1970; Askey et al. 2006). Such differences were  
 338 particularly marked in rainbow trout for which certain individuals had been recaptured up to  
 339 four times while others remained uncaptured despite repeated angling effort. In brown trout,  
 340 capture rates declined rapidly after one day of fishing and remained overall much lower than  
 341 for rainbow trout. Previous studies using selection lines of largemouth bass (*Micropterus*  
 342 *salmoides*) of high vs. low vulnerability to angling have highlighted that differences in  
 343 susceptibility to capture can be linked to individual variability of physiological traits such as



344 metabolism and anaerobic activity (Redpath et al. 2010), but also of levels of circulating  
 345 cortisol as indicator for stress responsiveness of fish (Louison et al. 2017). In our experiment,  
 346 after the standardized exposure to an experimental stressor, both species showed generally  
 347 elevated cortisol levels, which were about 10-fold higher than basal levels reported for fish  
 348 (Pankhurst 2011), indicating that all fish were in a stressed state when brain tissues were  
 349 sampled to measure neurotransmitter activity. However, individual variability in levels of  
 350 corticosteroids, catecholamines and their monoamine precursors were also evident in our  
 351 results indicating differences in stress responsiveness of individual fish within species.

352         In rainbow trout that had been repeatedly exposed to angling (i.e. high intensity  
 353 angling treatment), we discovered a phenotypic syndrome, i.e. co-variation among  
 354 functionally related traits that defines how the organism interacts with its environment and  
 355 sustains itself (Pigliucci and Hayden 2001; Závorka et al. 2017). Individual pond activity and  
 356 neuroendocrine activity (i.e. dopamine turnover and 5-HIAA, a major metabolite of  
 357 serotonin) and cortisol response (after exposure to a standardized experimental stressor) were  
 358 associated and correlated with individual vulnerability to angling, such that active rainbow  
 359 trout had a relative weaker neuroendocrine stress responsiveness than less active rainbow  
 360 trout. The role of neurotransmitters in stress physiology and behavioral plasticity in  
 361 vertebrates (Coppens et al. 2010), including fish (Winberg and Thörnqvist 2016), has recently  
 362 been highlighted. The chronic activation of the brain serotonergic system can cause  
 363 behavioral inhibition of feeding, locomotion and aggression (Winberg and Thörnqvist 2016).  
 364 Furthermore, the dopamine system is known to have a central role in conditioned behavioral  
 365 responses, influencing the motivational control over behavior (Wise 2004) affecting for  
 366 instance risk-taking or avoidance behavior (Höglund et al. 2005; Arias-Carrion and Poeppel  
 367 2007). Dopamine is also the precursor of noradrenaline, known to increase arousal and  
 368 general alertness (Singh et al. 2015). In rainbow trout, individual differences in the activation

369 of the HPI axis could therefore explain the observed differences in their behavior towards  
 370 fishing gear, via possible mechanism of sensory modulation leading to behavioral habituation  
 371 or inhibition, shaping the hook avoidance response under repeated angling stimuli.

372 The phenotypic syndrome associating pond activity and physiological stress  
 373 responsiveness (association with the activation of the serotonergic system for brown trout and  
 374 additionally with the activation of the dopamine system and levels of circulating plasma  
 375 cortisol in rainbow trout) was however only visible under high angling intensity. In  
 376 particular, in rainbow trout previously exposed to a low angling intensity there was a total  
 377 absence of associations of physiological stress responsiveness and behavioral traits.  
 378 Similarly, Killen and colleagues (2013) have shown that the relationships between behavioral  
 379 and physiological traits are sometimes only revealed by the presence of an environmental  
 380 stressor. We suggest that the phenotypic syndrome linking behavioral and physiological traits  
 381 (i.e. stress response) in rainbow trout was revealed only under repeated angling causing a  
 382 chronic stress response. Furthermore, it has been shown in rainbow trout, that only the  
 383 chronic activation of the brain serotonergic system causes a general behavioral inhibition  
 384 (Winberg et al. 2001; Winberg and Thörnqvist 2016).

385 For brown trout, while we also noted an association between pond activity and  
 386 serotonergic activity, we found no link between vulnerability to angling and the measured  
 387 phenotypic traits. This could be simply due to the overall lower catch rates found in brown  
 388 trout compared to rainbow trout, and explained by the fact that brown trout recovers slower in  
 389 terms of primary and secondary stress response in comparison to rainbow trout (Ruane et al.  
 390 1999), therefore increasing hook avoidance in that species. Additionally, sexual maturity was  
 391 observed in some brown trout at the end of the experiment and might have affected their  
 392 stress responsiveness (Pottinger et al. 1995). Further experiments, allowing longer recovery  
 393 periods between angling events or applying lower fishing effort that is more realistic of

394 natural settings, are required to investigate the behavioral, physiological and neurobiological  
395 mechanisms of angling selection in brown trout and wild fish in general.

### 396 **Management implications**

397 The results we found provide empirical evidence that harvest by angling can selectively  
398 target a non-random subset of harvested populations, characterized by active and stress-  
399 resilient phenotypes and that this result is not necessarily applying across contexts and  
400 species. However, for some species based on the documented assumption that the variation of  
401 phenotypic traits presents some degree of heritability (Danchin et al. 2011; Philipp et al.  
402 2009), the selective removal of the most stress resilient and active phenotypes by intensive  
403 angling may cause a shift towards an increase of shy phenotypes in exploited compared to  
404 unexploited populations (Arlinghaus et al. 2017; Louison et al. 2017).

405 The progressive removal of the fraction of highly vulnerable individuals can then generate a  
406 decrease in catchability (Alós et al. 2016) and affect the size-selectivity of harvesting (Tsuboi  
407 et al. 2016), ultimately affecting the satisfaction of anglers (Arlinghaus et al. 2017). In catch-  
408 and-release fisheries, even if fish populations might remain unaffected by evolutionary  
409 effects linked to selective removal, behavioral plasticity or adaptation in response to direct  
410 and indirect exposure to fishing gear can further decrease the fishing quality and catchability  
411 (Askey et al. 2006). In fact, in comparison to consumptive fisheries, under catch-and-release  
412 regulations fish have the potential to learn to identify and avoid the threat associated to  
413 angling via mechanisms of private (Beukema 1970; Klefoth et al. 2013), but also public  
414 information use (Danchin et al. 2004). This suggests that under intensive angling, fishing  
415 success will increasingly become density-independent. Rotational management systems  
416 might then be required in small-scale fisheries with high fishing pressure to enable fish to  
417 return to vulnerable stages after direct or indirect exposure to angling (Camp et al. 2015).

Domesticated fish appear generally to be more vulnerable to capture than wild fish (Brauhn and Kincaid 1982; Dwyer and Piper 1984; García-Marín et al. 1998; Mezzera and Largiadèr 2001; Biro and Post 2008). Our study adds to this literature showing that angling within a domesticated strain targets the most stress-resilient and active phenotypes, considered to be the fraction of a population with the highest invasion potential (Phillips and Suarez 2012; Juetten et al. 2014). This indicates that angling could be tailored to reduce the invasion potential of escaped or unintentionally released fish by reducing the propagule pressure of the most invasive phenotypes, at least when applied shortly after the release and in the vicinity of the release site. In practice, caution needs however to be taken as the efficiency of angling will be diluted in large fishery systems and with time after release due to behavioral plasticity and adaptation. Surviving domesticated fish can learn to avoid areas exposed to angling pressure and adapt their behavioral response to environmental and human-induced stressors rendering them less vulnerable to harvest over time, which may have further potential cascading effects on ecosystem functioning (Evangelista et al. 2017; Závorka et al. in press). Therefore, our study shall not be misread to suggest that angling alone will be an efficient removal method of invasive phenotypes or species (e.g. Paul et al. 2003; Evangelista et al. 2015).

Results from our study show that angling targets the most stress-resilient and active phenotypes of rainbow trout, supporting the suggestion that fishing-induced phenotypic selection may lead to an increased representation of stress-responsive and low-activity phenotypes in intensively harvested populations. Such selective removal may have further potential spillover effects at higher levels of ecological organization (Palkovacs et al. 2018) as well as for stock assessments and fisheries management (Arlinghaus et al. 2017). However, as we did not find similar results in brown trout, we consider that further experiments on wild fish and across environmental and fishing contexts are needed to

443 improve our understanding of fishing selection and predict possible effects of fisheries-  
444 induced evolution. Such experiments should particularly focus on further investigating the  
445 mechanistic link between behavioral and physiological traits that can possibly influence the  
446 fishing process (Hollins et al. 2018).

## 447 Ethical Statement

448 These experiments were conducted under license 15-2014 issued by the Ethical Committee  
449 for Animal Research in Gothenburg, and comply with Swedish and European law.

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## 459 Data Accessibility

460 The data supporting this article has been posted to figshare  
461 <http://dx.doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.c.3467493>

## 462 Author Contribution

463 BK, RA, JIJ developed the experimental design; BK, LZ, DA, JN carried out the experiment;  
464 POT, SV, BTB analyzed the samples; BK performed data analysis and wrote the initial draft;  
465 All authors contributed to the interpretation of results, the writing and editing of the paper.

466

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Tables

**Table 1.** Cox-proportional hazards regression model comparing the time until first capture and the probability of capture of rainbow and brown trout, with  $\beta$  the corresponding hazard coefficient and  $e^{\beta}$  the hazard probability. The number of events refers to the total number of captured individuals.

	$\beta$	$e^{\beta}$	$se(\beta)$	$z$	p-value
Species (Rainbow trout)	0.8728	2.3935	0.252	3.454	0.0005
n= 93, number of events= 73					
Likelihood ratio test = 12.76 on 1 df, p < 0.001					



**Table 2.** Cox-proportional hazards regression model examining the time until first capture and the probability of capture of rainbow trout in relationship to individual pond activity (i.e. number of detections) and plasma cortisol levels (after exposure to a standardized experimental stressor), with  $\beta$  the corresponding hazard coefficient and  $e^{\beta}$  the hazard probability. The number of events refers to the number of individuals captured by angling during angling experiment 1, in pond 1 and 3 (i.e. under high intensity angling treatment).

	$\beta$	$e^{\beta}$	$se(\beta)$	$z$	p-value
Detections	0.1827	1.2005	0.074	2.346	0.019
Cortisol	-0.0048	0.9951	0.003	-2.083	0.037
n = 47, number of events = 44					
Likelihood ratio test = 11.99 on 2 df, p = 0.002					

684

685

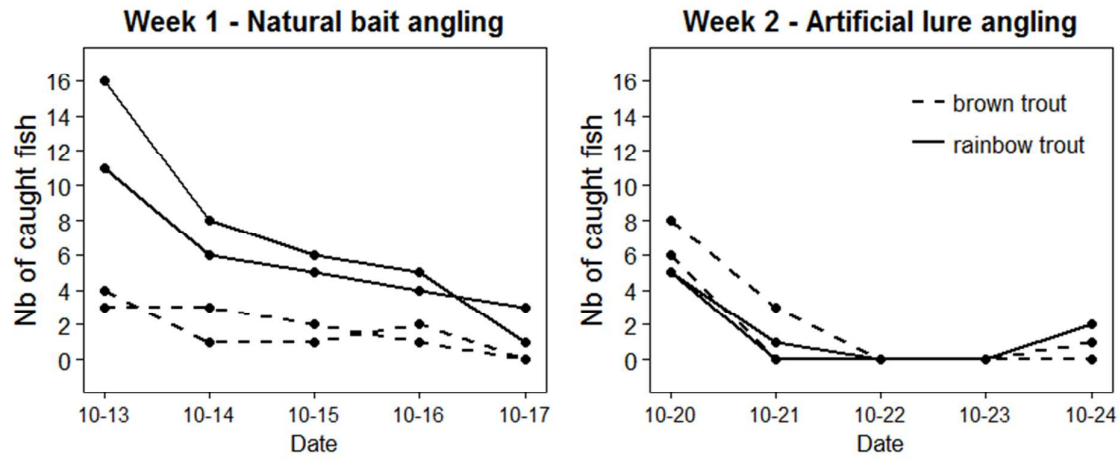
686 **Table 3.** Cox-proportional hazards regression model examining the time until first capture  
687 and the probability of capture of brown trout in relationship to individual pond activity (i.e.  
688 number of detections) and plasma cortisol levels (after exposure to a standardized  
689 experimental stressor), with  $\beta$  the corresponding hazard coefficient and  $e^{\beta}$  the hazard  
690 probability. The number of events refers to the number of individuals captured by angling  
691 during angling experiment 1, in pond 1 and 3 (i.e. under high intensity angling treatment).

	$\beta$	$e^{\beta}$	$se(\beta)$	$z$	p-value
Detections	-0.0064	0.9936	0.103	-0.069	0.945
Cortisol	0.0041	1.0041	0.004	0.959	0.338
n = 37, number of events = 24					
Likelihood ratio test = 0.82 on 2 df, p = 0.663					

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694 Figures

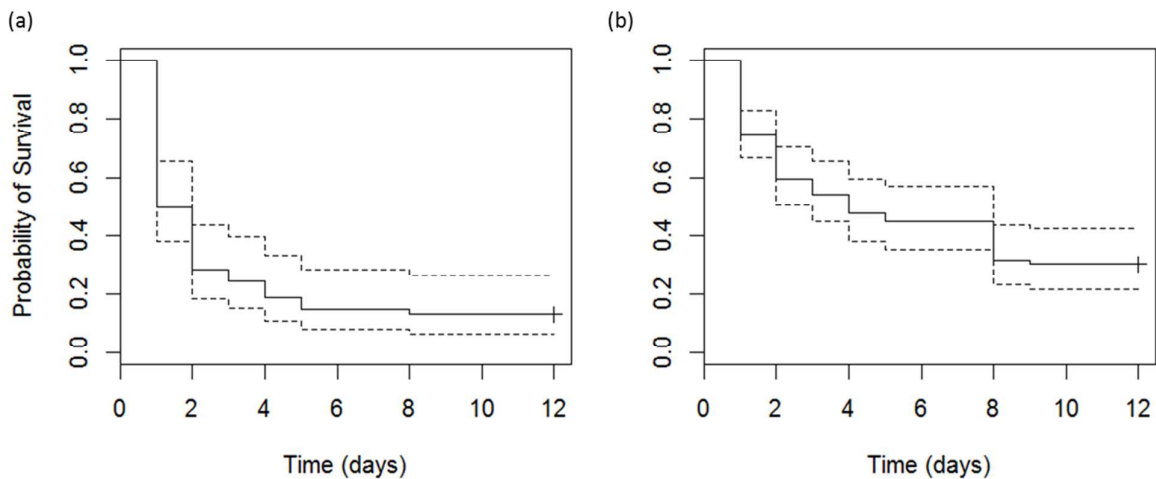


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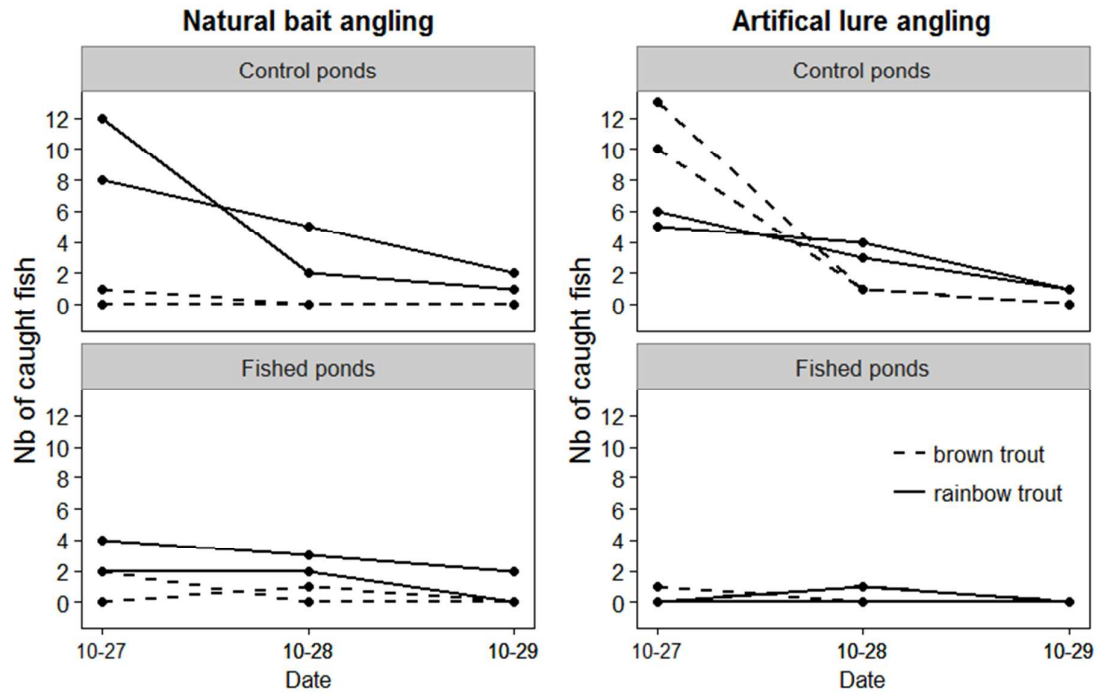
696 **Figure 1.** Number of captured fish per angling day for successive bait and lure angling

697 (experiment 1) in pond 1 and 3.

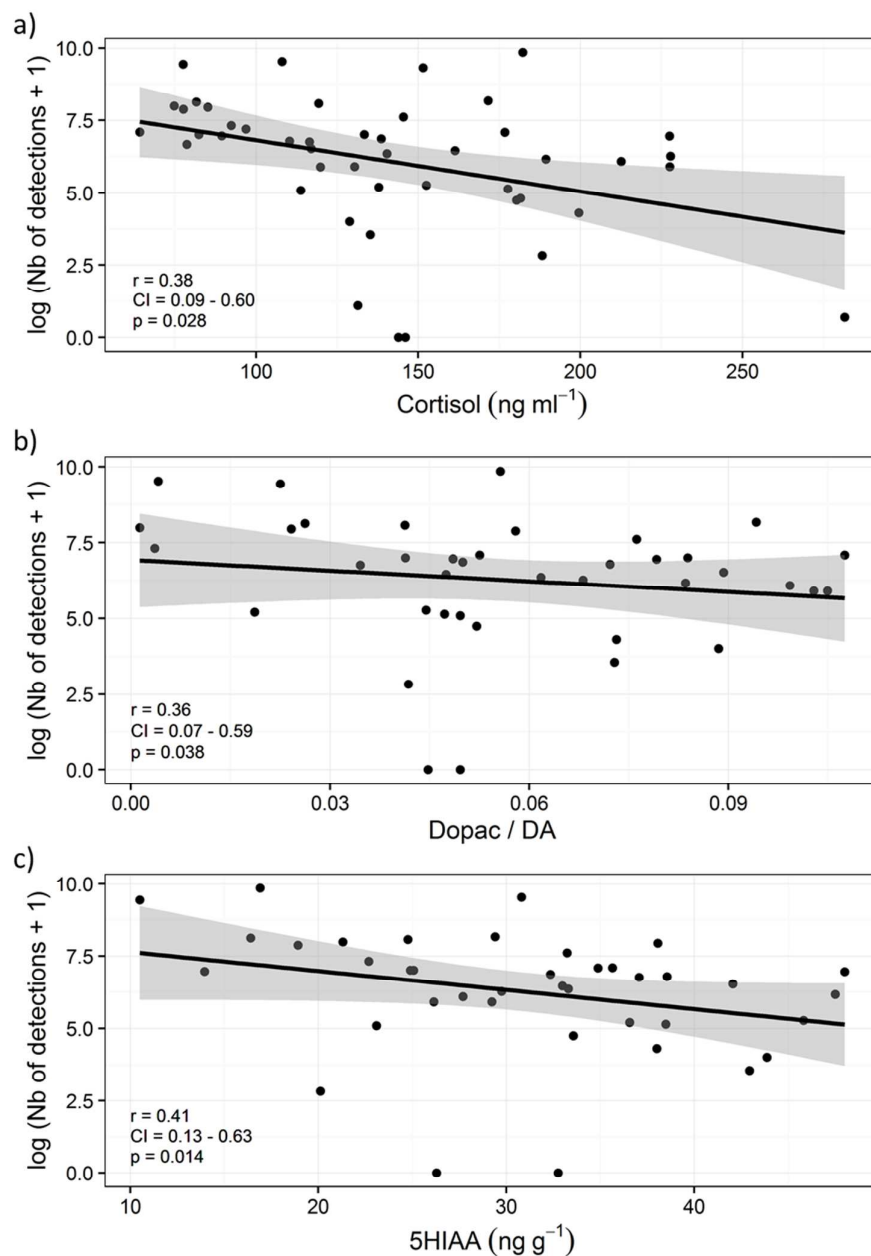
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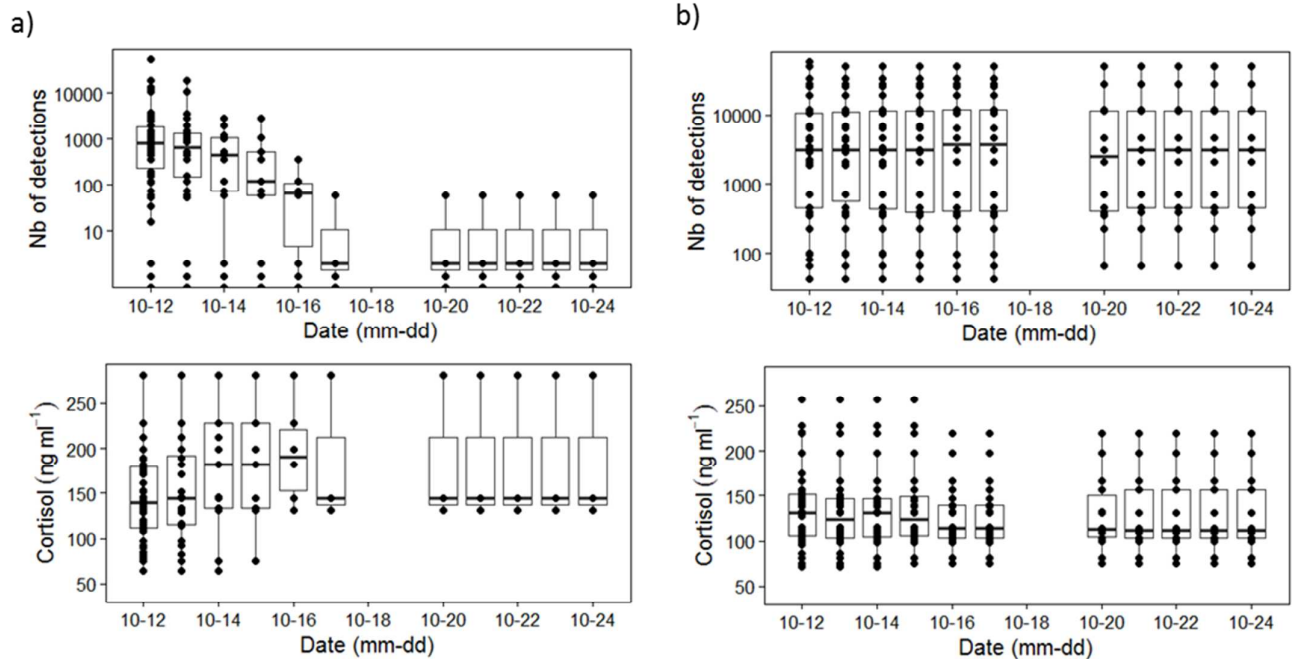
**Figure 2.** Survival curves (i.e. probability of remaining uncaptured over time) of rainbow trout (a) and brown trout (b) during the first angling experiment in ponds 1 and 3 (i.e. under high intensity angling treatment). Dashed lines correspond to a 95% confidence envelop around the survival function. (day 1 to 5: natural bait angling, day 8 to 12: artificial lure angling).



**Figure 3.** Number of captured fish per angling day for simultaneous bait and lure angling (experiment 2) in previously unfished control ponds (ponds 2 and 4: low angling intensity) and previously fished ponds (ponds 1 and 3: high angling intensity).



**Figure 4.** Correlation plots for rainbow trout from the high intensity angling treatment between pond activity (log transformed number of detections) and plasma cortisol, dopamine turnover (DOPAC / DA) and serotonin metabolite 5-HIAA levels after exposure to a standardized experimental stressor. Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficient, confidence intervals CI and p-values are displayed. A linear model was fitted (solid line) and a 95% confidence interval estimated (grey area).



**Figure 5.** Average pond activity and cortisol level (after exposure to a standardized experimental stressor) of the remaining uncaptured rainbow trout (a) and brown trout (b) over angling days of experiment 1 and high intensity angling treatment. Box-plots of the first angling day (October 12<sup>th</sup>) represent the average pond activity and cortisol level of rainbow and brown trout from the high intensity angling treatment (pond 1 and 3). After the first capture of an individual, its' corresponding activity or cortisol level value is removed from the dataset and the average value recalculated for the remaining uncaptured fish.

## **Appendix: Angling selects against stress-resilient and active phenotypes**

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## A1. Experimental pond setup

Two full-scale replicated angling experiments were successively carried out in four semi-controlled mesocosm ponds (area =  $30 \times 24 = 720 \text{ m}^2$ , depth = 2 m) belonging to the Swedish anglers association *Sportfiskarna* in Gothenburg, Sweden (57.693°N, 12.037°E). Prior to the experiments, vegetation and fish were removed from all ponds to create comparable conditions. Ponds were supplied with unfiltered lake water (Lake *Delsjön*) containing natural food supply for trout. Each pond was stocked with size-matched rainbow ( $298 \pm 19 \text{ mm}$ ) and brown trout ( $281 \pm 15 \text{ mm}$ ) in equal densities (25 individuals per species and pond). Both trout species originated from the *Källefalls* hatchery and were reared under comparable conditions (: <http://www.hokensas.se/en/fish-farming/kallefall/>). The brown trout were F1 offspring from wild parents captured in the near-by Lake *Vättern*. The rainbow trout were of a domesticated strain, now bred since 1997 within the hatchery and used exclusively for stocking for angling in Swedish waters.

## A2. Angling gear and design

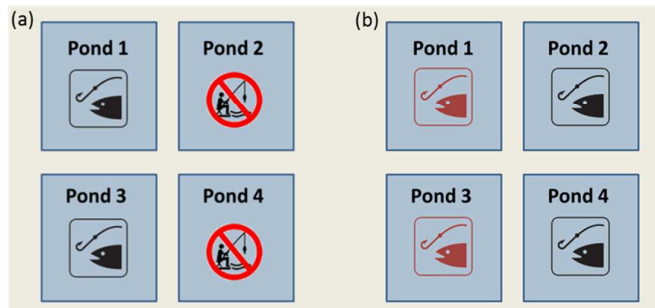
Two commonly used angling techniques were used for the angling experiments; natural shrimp baits and spinnerbait lures, to be representative of angler habits. Natural bait angling was carried out using the shrimp on a barbless hook (size 6), tackled beneath a floater. Anglers were fishing passively with the shrimp bait by casting it and retrieving it slowly, while lure angling was fished actively using a spinnerbait (Myrans WIPP Yellow/White, 10 g; Sportsystem i Jönköping AB, Huskvarna), which was cast and retrieved at a fast speed. Despite the fact that angling is considered a generally passive fishing method, in order to discriminate both angling methods in the present study, we refer to lure angling as an active method and to bait angling as a passive angling method. With the exception of these two types of terminal tackles, identical angling equipment was used for all angling experiments

(Abu Garcia rod: 7 ft, power 10-40 g; braided line: resistance 10 lb; “Impact” haspel spinning reel: size 3000).

Angling experiments were carried out by experienced volunteer anglers, who were instructed to the protocol of the experiments to reduce bias associated to fish handling after capture. Hooked fish were landed with a knotless net and unhooked by fishermen using a plier designed for that specific purpose. Fish were then kept in a holding tank ( $L \times W \times D$ ;  $90 \times 90 \times 40$  cm) at the side of the pond until returned to their pond at the end of the fishing event. A fish could thus be captured only once per fishing event, but recaptured at each new event. Unless conditions required so, handling of fish with bare hands was avoided to limit mucus abrasion. Date, time, pond and PIT-tag number (hand-held PIT tag reader; BTS-ID, Helsingborg, Sweden) were recorded.

In angling experiment 1, angling was practiced in only pond 1 and pond 3 of the four experimental ponds, and consisted of five days of natural bait angling followed by five days of lure angling, with a two days interval without fishing in between (Fig. 1a). In angling experiment 2, angling was performed in all four ponds with ponds 1 and 3 previously exposed to angling and ponds 2 and 4 containing fish naïve to angling (Fig. 1b). It consisted of three angling events with simultaneous bait and lure angling to verify the results from the species-specific selectivity of angling technique from experiment 1, while excluding the temporal effect of a successive use of angling technique. To spread out the angling effort evenly, anglers were assigned to defined fishing zones within in each pond. Every tenth minute anglers changed fishing zone and/or angling gear (i.e. artificial lure or natural bait) according to a randomization schedule to control for bias in fishing skills of anglers, site preference and gear effect. At the end of the two angling experiments, ponds 1 and 3 had

each received a total fishing effort of 36 hours (high angling intensity treatment) and pond 2 and 4 had received only 6 hours of angling (low angling intensity treatment).

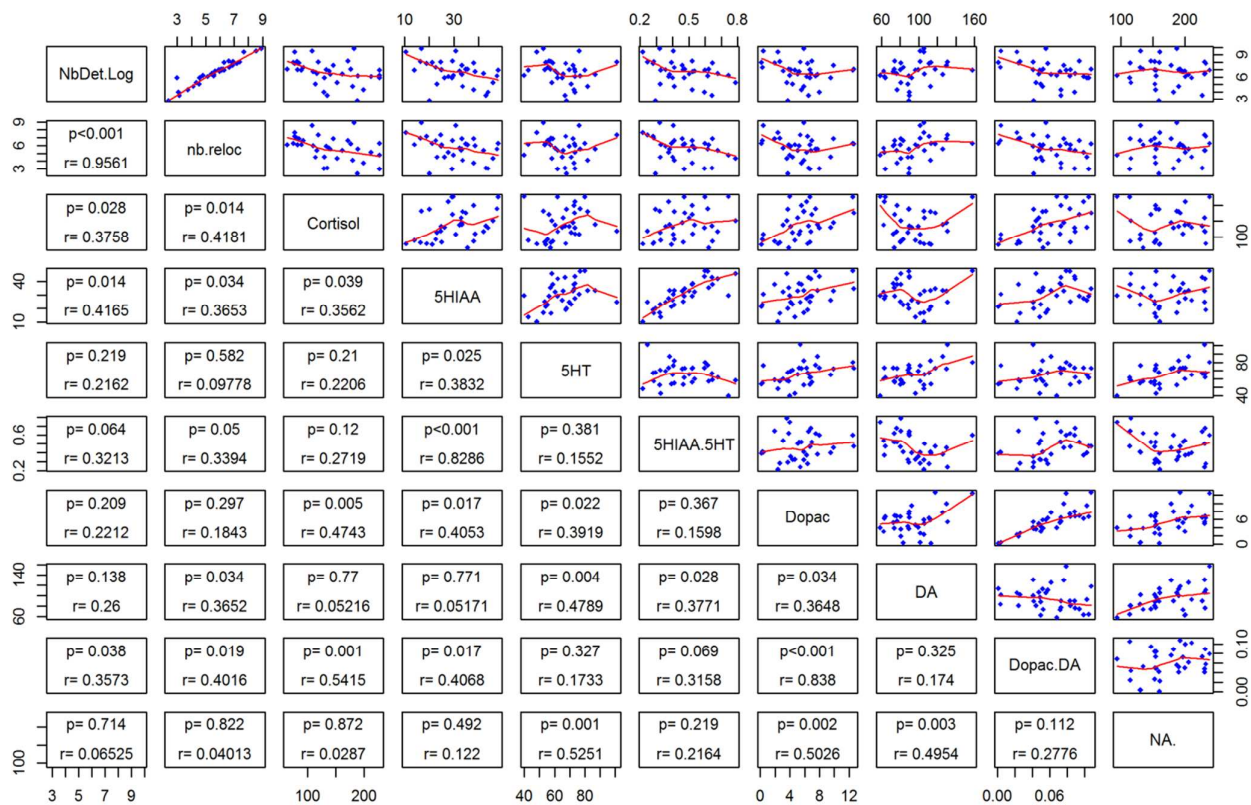


**Figure A1.** Experimental treatments in the four mesocosm ponds for (a) the first angling experiment, and (b) the second angling experiment, where fish in pond 1 and 3 had already experienced angling and fish in pond 2 and 4 were naïve to angling.

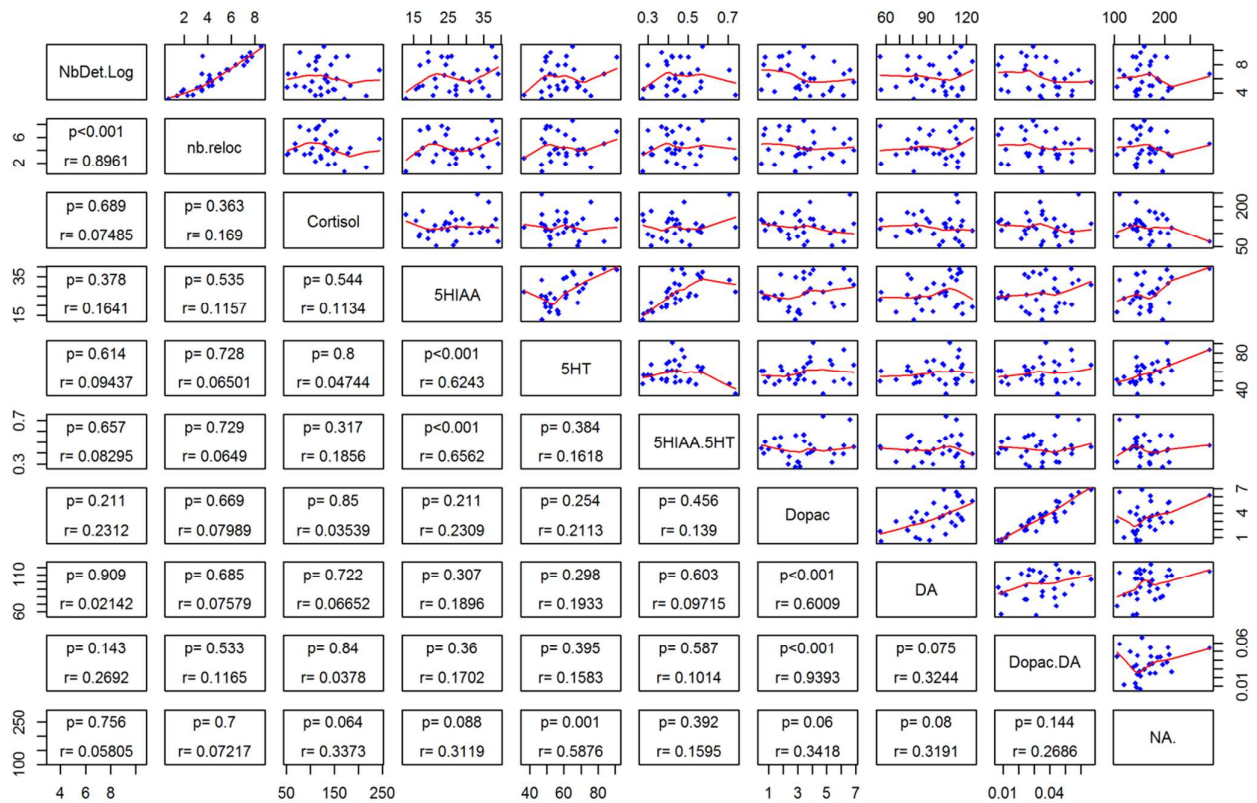
### A3. Behavioral scoring

The scoring consisted of recording activity of individual fish in an open-field test in white barren tanks ( $L \times W \times D$ ;  $90 \times 90 \times 40$  cm) using a video-camera positioned above the tanks during 20 min following 10 min of acclimation. The automated image analysis software LoliTrack (4.0, Loligo Systems ApS) was used to analyse the video records and extract an activity proxy based on the cumulated distance moved during the 20-min trial by each individual. Fish from a same holding tank were scored at the same time to standardize fish handling and to reduce any bias linked to handling stress.

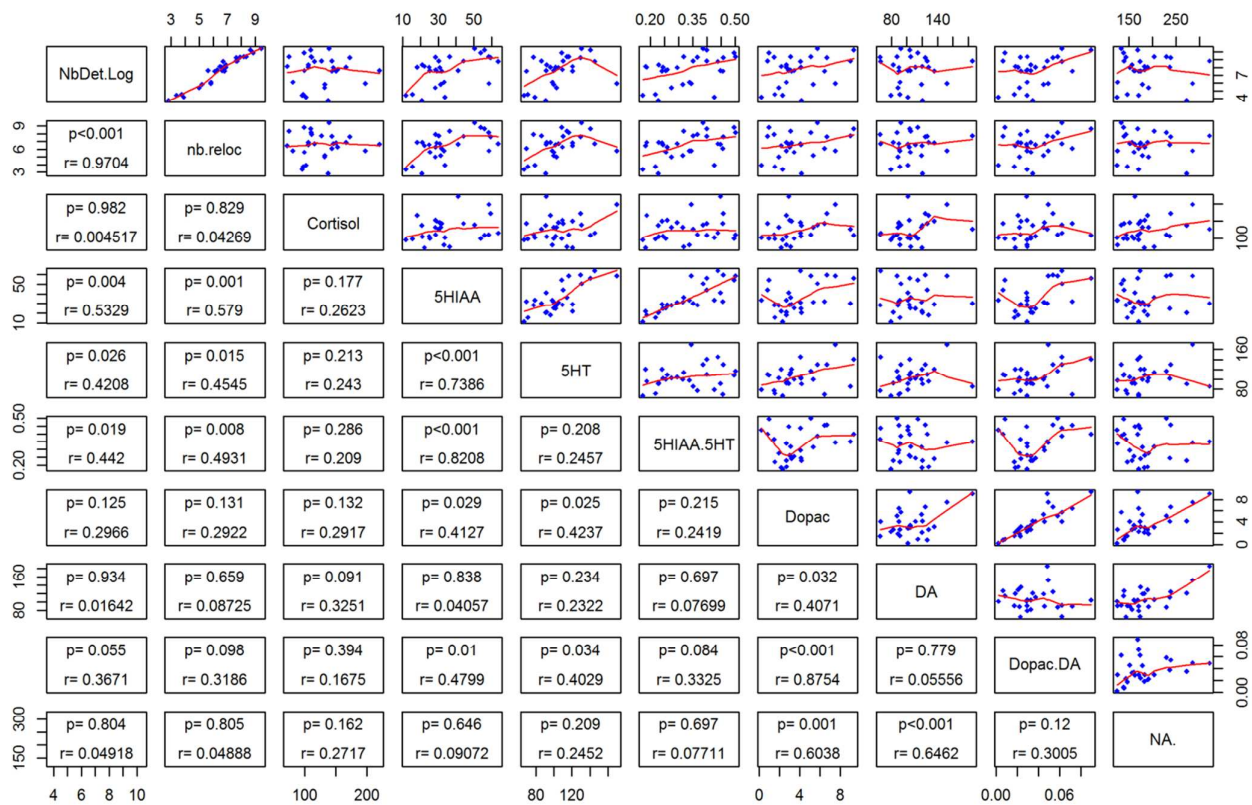
A4. Correlations between individual activity and physiological stress responses



**Figure A2.** Pearson's correlation matrix for rainbow trout from the high intensity angling treatment between pond activity (NbDet.Log: log transformed number of total detections; nb.reloc: number of relocations between antennas), plasma cortisol ( $\text{ng ml}^{-1}$ ), neurotransmitters ( $\text{ng g}^{-1}$ ) and neurotransmitter activity levels (Dopac.DA: dopaminergic activity; 5-HIAA.5-HT: serotonergic activity) after exposure to a standardized experimental stressor. Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficient and adjusted  $p$ -values are given in the lower half of the matrix and correlation plots in the upper part of the matrix.

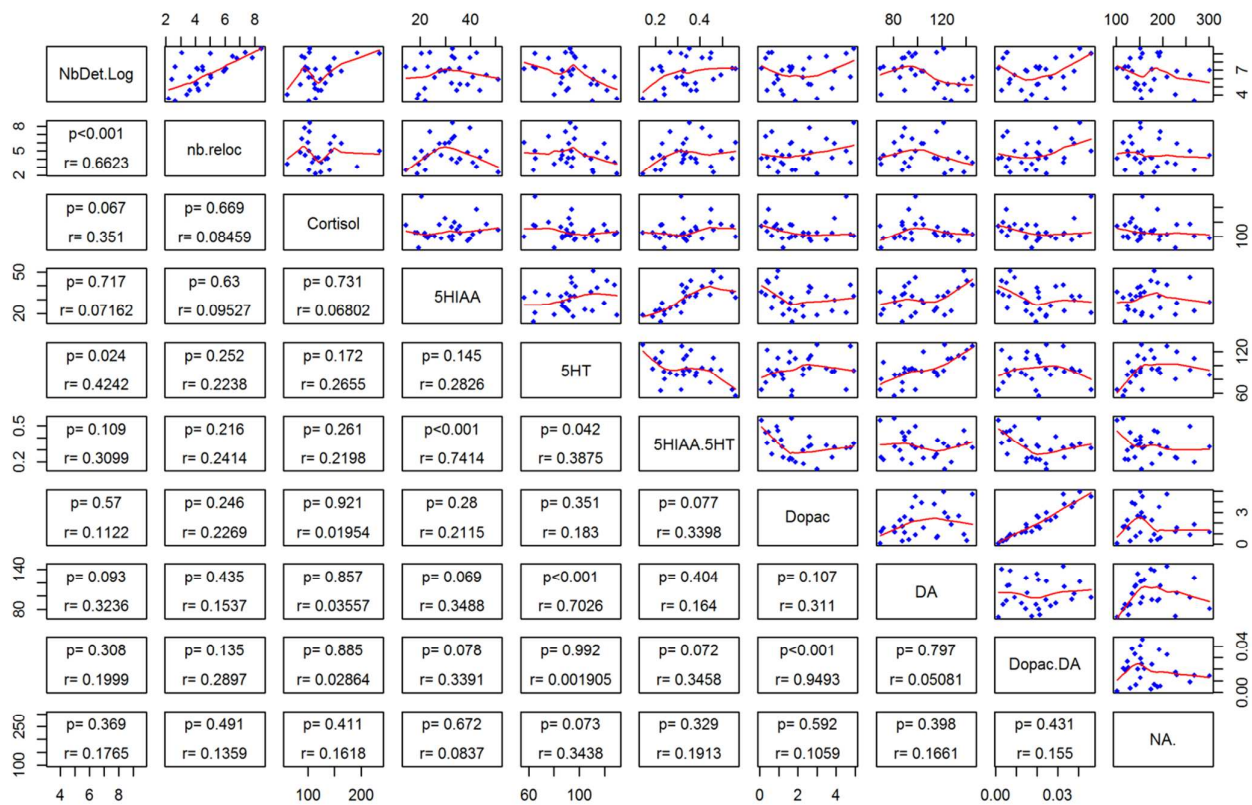


**Figure A3.** Pearson's correlation matrix for rainbow trout from the low intensity angling treatment between pond activity (NbDet.Log: log transformed number of total detections; nb.reloc: number of relocations between antennas), plasma cortisol ( $\text{ng ml}^{-1}$ ), neurotransmitters ( $\text{ng g}^{-1}$ ) and neurotransmitter activity levels (Dopac.DA: dopaminergic activity; 5-HIAA.5-HT: serotonergic activity) after exposure to a standardized experimental stressor.



**Figure A4.** Pearson's correlation matrix for brown trout from the high intensity angling treatment between pond activity (NbDet.Log: log transformed number of total detections; nb.reloc: number of relocations between antennas), plasma cortisol ( $\text{ng ml}^{-1}$ ), neurotransmitters ( $\text{ng g}^{-1}$ ) and neurotransmitter activity levels (Dopac.DA: dopaminergic activity; 5-HIAA.5-HT: serotonergic activity) after exposure to a standardized experimental stressor.





**Figure A5.** Pearson's correlation matrix for brown trout from the low intensity angling treatment between pond activity (NbDet.Log: log transformed number of total detections; nb.reloc: number of relocations between antennas), plasma cortisol ( $\text{ng ml}^{-1}$ ), neurotransmitters ( $\text{ng g}^{-1}$ ) and neurotransmitter activity levels (Dopac.DA: dopaminergic activity; 5-HIAA.5-HT: serotonergic activity) after exposure to a standardized experimental stressor.